

Boaz Noy | The Garden Keeper

Curator: Avi Lubin

Boaz Noy's painting starts from a personal experience, a moment of random and unplanned encounter while wandering in the city. Although he wanders in places that he already knows, these rambles still summon surprises for him. Noy allows himself to rediscover the city time after time, meeting it each time anew. Like Baudelaire's or Benjamin's flâneur, his wanderings may not have a purpose in the strict sense of the word, but they offer a new perspective on the familiar space, attention to the urban environment, and a search for inspiration and wonderment in everyday life.

Next follows a process of mapping and painting. Noy typically creates preparatory studies on the street and in the studio before he approaches the painting itself. This is when he decides what to leave out, what is essential and what is superfluous, emphasizing what he deems important in terms of content or composition, distilling his impression of the stroll. At times he decides to foreground spaces of light and shadow, other times to emphasize the vegetation (figus, oleander, or olive), and sometimes he highlights a certain color or an element in the urban space, like scaffolding, a group of boys, or a café. In the transition to the canvas, buildings become forms and colors and the urban space turns into compositions of the landscape. In this process he is not committed to the image of the street but rather to its deconstruction, delving into its fundamental elements and reassembling them based on a private and emotional experience.

Noy paints the landscape of his home town Haifa, as well as Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Each of these cities imbues the painting with a different pictorial, chromatic, emotional, material, and human experience. The paintings depict parks, alleyways, streets and buildings, most of which are empty of people and yet the human presence is strongly felt in them. Noy's urban landscapes straddle the line between figurative and abstract painting and between realism and expressionism. The markers of local urbanism are accentuated in the paintings, becoming gestures of color – balconies, awnings, traffic lights, fountains, poles, power lines, water heaters, trees, curbstones, and signposts.

The exhibition *The Garden Keeper* took shape over the last year, and particularly in the last couple of months. With great intensity, Noy painted works in which the silence and the wait became infused with dread, empty alleys became potential sites of disaster and nocturnal parks turned into areas of unease. In the exhibition, designed for the space of the museum's colonnade, Noy responds to the gallery that to some extent resembles the spaces of the city depicted in his paintings.